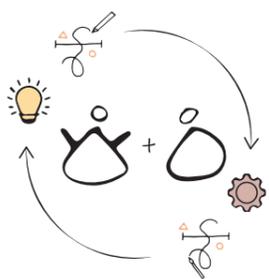
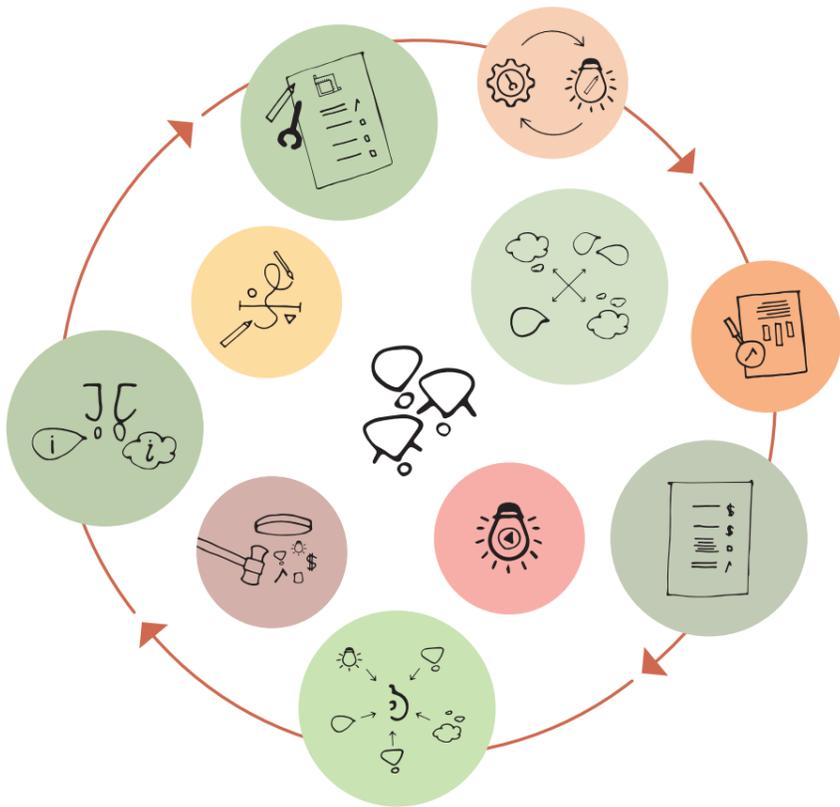


for citizen participation and
influence on public space

co.creation process model



co.creation

Co-creation is a design concept where the end users are involved in the process to collaboratively define and tackle challenges together with the initiator. The concept is spread globally and is used in various disciplines, depending on context. Co-creation starts from the idea that everyone is an expert on one issue or another - everyone has something to contribute with - and the different levels of expertise people possess are equally valuable in co-creation. It means that anyone can influence the outcome but also the process.

Co-creation is based on user participation - to find common solutions to common problems. It is shared responsibility in partnership with other stakeholders. Partnership means respect and mutual trust, but it is not equal to participation. Political goodwill and a strong local organisation with good presentation are crucial conditions for participation to be able to work in practice. In urban development and planning it is about inviting the citizens to the decision-making process, and thereby balancing the power relations between the top-down and bottom-up perspectives. This strengthens and builds trust to the democracy, but also establishes a common understanding from different perspectives and thereby creates a more relevant and directed development. It is a matter of combining factual and theoretical knowledge which the civil servants possess with what is called "experience-based knowledge". This means a change of new demands for both

the city and the citizen roles as well as the principles of representative democracy. All interested parties should have equal access to information, and thereby equal preconditions for decision-making. The capacity for sustained dialogue applies not only to civil servants but also to citizens, who need to expect to invest a lot of time and energy. Early awareness of one another's conditions is therefore important to avoid disappointment and frustration.

Co-creation can be described as a process in which co-creators on equal terms participate continuously from problem formulation, action identification to implementation of actions. The co-creators thereby become co-responsible for the result. By confronting discrimination, exclusion and dissatisfaction, it is made clear what is possible and what is insufficient in the co-creation process, and this appears to be central to empowerment of citizens.

Political decisions are crucial for co-creation. Furthermore, it is important that there is a budget directed to citizen participation and co-creation. Clear communication regarding political missions and budgets, and possibilities of citizen influence is essential. Important is to clarify at what political level and by whom decisions could be made, what kind of agreements there are and how they practically should be implemented and followed up. From this grows the insight on how decision-making processes take place and hopefully also a greater understanding of democratic urban development.

level of citizen participation & influence

Sweden's municipalities and regions (SKR), has developed a graphic model for strategies and methods for citizen participation in urban planning. The model is a staircase inspired by Arnstein's "Ladder of citizen participation" from 1969, where the steps correspond to the extent of citizen's power in determining the end product. SKR's model consists of five steps:

information: one way communication.

consultation: citizens have a saying in certain matters.

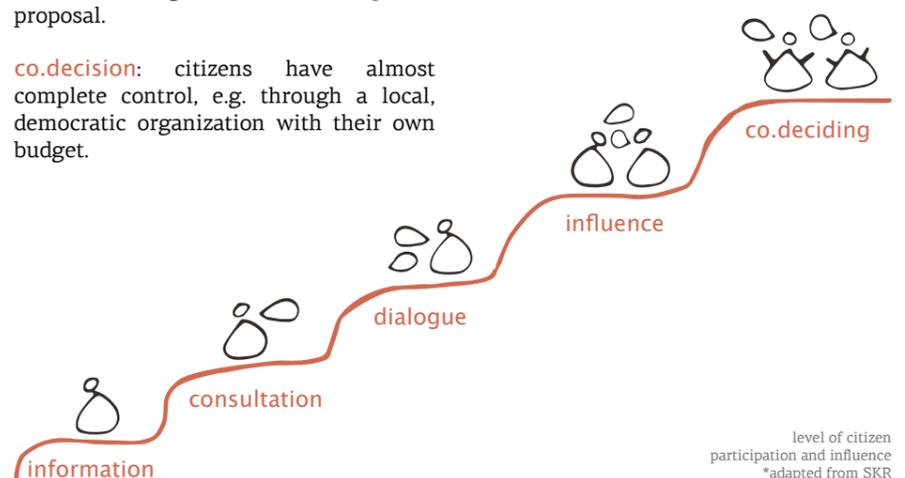
dialogue: a form of consultation in which citizens' views are taken into account in the decision-making process, but not directly influencing the decisions.

influence: letting citizens participate in and follow the planning process and decision-making from idea to completed proposal.

co.decision: citizens have almost complete control, e.g. through a local, democratic organization with their own budget.

It is only in the upper segment of the model one can talk about real participation. This is what Arnstein defines as civil power: partnership, delegated power and, foremost, citizen control. At these steps, citizens have a direct formal influence on the decision-making, by being part of or forming their own boards of directors with clear powers.

The difference between SKR's model and Arnstein's is that the steps in Arnstein's ladder are a researcher's analysis tool while the staircase aims to help officials and politicians to design their methods. Arnstein's ideological attempt is to reach the top of the ladder, while SKR on the other hand describes the five steps more as equivalent strategies to choose from, although the degree of influence is different. Real co-creation processes are based on a high level of citizen influence and co-decisions.



level of citizen participation and influence
*adapted from SKR

Title: exploring co-creation
on public space
for citizen participation and influence
(where references can be found)

Master's thesis at Chalmers school of architecture
Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering
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co.creation process model

The roles of the actors vary depending on which of the phases is temporarily addressed. In practice, the participants move back and forth in the different phases, rather than in a chronological order and there is no clear grouping of stakeholders. It seems important to consider co.creation as a process where the roles of the actors are mobile. There should be an exchange of useful information, experiences, knowledges and ideas, based on equal levels of involvement. By nurturing a common cause, as well as by sharing the ownership of problems – and then consequently its solutions – action can take place. It has been shown that tangible results have been crucial for participation to be successful.



formulate strategy & objectives, establish collaboration platforms



Connect and recruit participants and welcome ideas, wishes and needs.

.what and where are the issues or problems?
.how should they be treated or improved?
Do not say "no" to ideas and input, visualise instead different perspectives.



decide on program, procedure & expected outcome

Important is to establish how decisions during the rest of the process should be made and by whom!



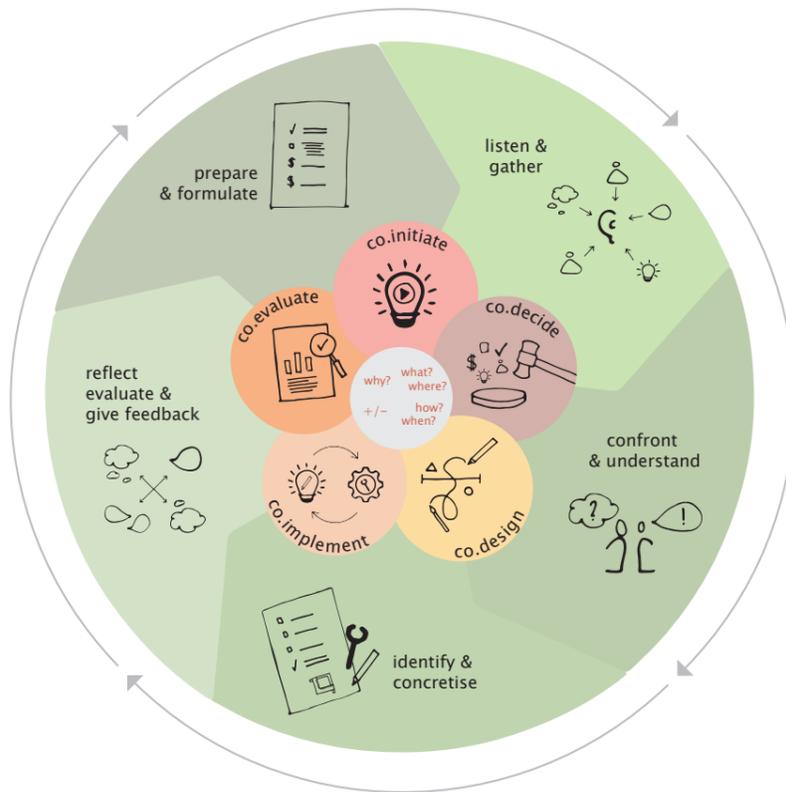
Analyse the biggest challenges through common reflection and problematise different perspectives which emerged during previous phase. Understand the time frame and the available resources as well as the legislative and social context and make clear what is feasible and what is insufficient for the specific event/project. To be able to find solutions that can lead to co.decisions, disagreements, dissatisfaction and dependencies in power relations should be raised as well as common values, targets and interests.

. what do we want and what is possible to achieve?
. how and when do we want to achieve it?
. how should we tackle disagreements or change in conditions?



develop action plan & proposal, then realise the proposal

Design and implementation can be interlinked actions and performed as a Design & Build participatory project, depending on the event/project scope and citizens' wishes of participation.



Define the purpose, conditions and goals of the event/project strategy.

.what do we intend to achieve and why?
. who should be involved and why?
. what resources are available?
. how are the results of the participation intended to be used?
After formulating the conditions, promote the event/project and invite to participation.

link between cycles

The result from the reflect, evaluate & give feedback phase should be taken into account and work as a foundation for the prepare & formulate phase and the first steps of the next cycle. Focus on:
. Why are we doing this? Why is this important?



Reflect on the experiences and analyse the process and achievements.

.what was said and done? +/-
. how did the power relations look like?
. who had a voice/saying?
. who participated and who was missing?
. what decisions were made?
. did we follow the plan and achieved what we wanted?
. what was the challenges or biggest struggles?
. did conditions change during the process? what? how did we handle them?
. what did we learn?
. what can and should be improved in following processes?

assessment & follow-up of process & achievements



Design the action plan, by choosing one or multiple methods and define tasks, measures and responsibilities. Set adequate timelines and organise required resources. Then, implement the plan.



applied model

The co.creation process invites citizen to take part in decision-making, by open up the meetings and letting citizens select facilitator and project group as well as taking part in the screening, review and selection of proposals.

By working with Design & Build methodology when implementing the projects, engaged citizens can also take part in the realisation, which strengthens the ownership, commitment and trust to the process and concept.

Finally, during the evaluation phase, which works as a foundation for next cycle, citizens select the next facilitator and take part in the formulation of conditions and criterias.

Co.creation processes takes time, and it is suggested to start the second phase as early as possible of a new year of operation.

